

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7889

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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E.O. LL652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: AN AMALGAMATED IRELAND?

FOLLOWING TRANSMITTED BY CONSULATE GENERAL BELFAST:

BEGIN SUMMARY PARAS 1-5 OUTLINE "AMALGAMATED IRELAND"
PROPOSAL OF PROTESTANT POLITICIAN DESMOND BOAL, WHICH
HAS CAUSED SO MUCH COMMENT HERE. IF ONE ACCEPTS
BOAL'S PREMISE THAT ONLY VIABLE LONG-TERM SOLUTION IS
IRELAND UNITED BY CONSENT, THEN FEDERAL SOLUTION SUCH
AS BOAL'S SEEMS POSSIBLE WAY TO PRESERVE PROTESTANT
INTERESTS WHILE ACHIEVING IRISH UNITY. BUT MOST
PROTESTANTS SAY THAT IF LINK WITH UK MUST BE BROKEN,
THEY GREATLY PREFER INDEPENDENT ULSTER TO ANY FORM OF
UNITED IRELAND. IF PARAMILITARY ELEMENTS IN BOTH
COMMUNITIES ACCEPTED BOAL'S PROPOSALS, THEY MIGHT OFFER
PROSPECT FOR END OF VIOLENCE, WHICH SUNNINGDALE HAS NOT
ACHIEVED, BUT SO FAR MOST PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY
ELEMENTS REJECT ANY ALL-IRELAND SOLUTION AND/OR PREFER
INDEPENDENT ULSTER. MAIN VALUE OF BOAL'S PROPOSAL IS
THAT IT HAS STIMULATED LOYALISTS OPPOSED TO EXECUTIVE
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AND SUNNINGDALE TO THINK ABOUT SERIOUS ALTERNATIVES,

RATHER THAN NON-STARTERS LIKE RETURN TO OLD STORMONT OR
TOTAL INTEGRATION WITH UK. END SUMMARY

L. IN OLD STORMONT DESMOND BOAL REPRESENTED SHANKILL
CONSTITUENCY IN WEST BELFAST FOR IAN PAISLEY'S
DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY AND WAS WIDELY REGARDED AS
PAISLEY'S "EMINENCE ORANGE." AFTER DIRECT RULE HE AND
PAISLEY ADVOCATED TOTAL INTEGRATION OF NI WITHIN UK.
WHEN PAISLEY TOOK DUP INTO LOYALIST COALITION WITH
VANGUARD IN OPPOSITION TO HMG'S MARCH 1973 WHITE PAPER
ON NI'S POLITICAL FUTURE, BOAL DROPPED OUT OF PUBLIC
LIFE, AND LAST AUTUMN HE FORMALLY RESIGNED AS CHAIRMAN
OF DUP. AS PROMINENT BARRISTER HE HAS DEFENDED MANY
LOYALIST TERRORIST SUSPECTS BEFORE COURTS AND DETENTION
TRIBUNALS. HE IS HIGHLY RESPECTED IN BOTH SECTIONS OF
COMMUNITY FOR PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND ABILITY, THOUGH HE
PREFERS BACKSTAGE TO SPOTLIGHT.

2. IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 6 BELFAST SUNDAY
NEWS, BOAL SAID IT HAD BECOME CLEAR TOTAL INTEGRATION
WITH UK IS NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE BRITISH WISH TO DISENGAGE
FROM IRELAND. ON OTHER HAND, TOTAL INDEPENDENCE WAS
"NEVER ON" AND WOULD BE "PATENTLY DISASTROUS; AND
NORTHERN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO
BELIEVE THAT NATIONAL ASPIRATION OF UNITED IRELAND WAS
REALISABLE. BOAL WAS DRIVEN TO CONCLUSION THAT ONLY
VIABLE POSSIBILITY IS "AMALGAMATED IRELAND."

3. BOAL CONTENDED THIS IS ALREADY BEING ESTABLISHED
THROUGH INSTITUTIONS BEING SET UP UNDER SUNNINGDALE
AGREEMENT, BUT THOSE INVOLVED (I.E. FAULKNERITE
UNIONISTS AND ALLIANCE) ARE ALL THE WHILE INSISTING IT
IS NOT REALLY HAPPENING. BOAL PREFERS IT BE
ACCOMPLISHED BY CANVASSING FRANKLY THE DIFFICULTIES
AND IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A COURSE, ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO
APPRECIATE THESE AND EDUCATING THEM "INTO AN
UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THEIR ESSENTIAL INTERESTS MAY BEST
BE SERVED BY THE CREATION OF SUCH A POLITICAL ENTITY.
THEN TO NEGOTIATE OUR WAY INTO IT AS A UNITED AND
INFORMED COMMUNITY FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH."
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4. BOAL WOULD BE READY TO CONSIDER A FEDERAL IRISH
PARLIAMENT HOLDING THE KIND OF POWERS FORMERLY RESERVED
TO WESTMINSTER UNDER 1920 GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND ACT,
TOGETHER WITH PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT POSSESSING THE
POWERS RECENTLY HELD BY STORMONT AS "THE GUARDIAN OF OUR
ESSENTIAL LIBERTIES AND SOCIAL VALUES WHOSE PRESERVATION
WE WOULD SECURE SIMPLY BY BEING A MAJORITY."

5. DEALING WITH POSSIBLE ARGUMENTS AGAINST HIS
PROPOSAL, BOAL CONCEDED IT WOULD INVOLVE A BREAK IN LINK
WITH UK, BUT HE SAID CONNECTION IS IN FACT ALREADY
BEING BROKEN, AND SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO BRITAIN HAS
RECENTLY EVAPORATED "EVEN TO BE REPLACED SOMETIMES BY

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BITTERNESS AND HOSTILITY." HE CONCEDED HIS PROPOSALS
WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF PROVISIONAL IRA, BUT WHY NOT,
"PARTICULARLY IN THAT THEY COULD CONCEIVABLY LEAD TO
THE RECONCILIATION OF APPARENTLY IRRECONCILABLE
EXTREMES"? UNLIKE SUNNINGDALE, BOAL ARGUES,
AMALGAMATED IRELAND PROPOSAL, PROPERLY PRESENTED AND
ARGUED, HAS POSSIBILITY OF ASSUAGING PROTESTANT FEARS
AND ENDING PROVISIONAL VIOLENCE, BECAUSE "BOTH THE
MAJORITY AND THE MINORITY COULD SAY WITH JUSTIFICATION
THAT THE GREATER PART OF THEIR POLITICAL AMBITIONS HAD
BEEN REALISED -- PROTESTANTS BECAUSE THEIR TWO MAIN
PRINCIPLES (DEFENCE OF PROTESTANT FAITH AND WAY

OF LIFE) HAD BEEN SAFEGUARDED AND ROMAN CATHOLICS BECAUSE THE PRINCIPLE OF UNIFICATION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED. AT BEST IT IS HONEST AND WORTH CONSIDERING."

6. COMING FROM A MAN WITH BOAL'S LOYALIST CREDENTIALS, "AMALGAMATED IRELAND" PROPOSAL CREATED CONSIDERABLE STIR AMONG PROTESTANTS. FOR FAULKNER UNIONISTS, ROY BRADFORD DESCRIBED IT AS A POSSIBLE SCENARIO IF ONE IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREPARED TO BREAK THE UNION. A VANGUARD SPOKESMAN REJECTED ANY ALL-IRELAND SOLUTION AND INSISTED ANY SOLUTION MUST BE IN BRITISH CONTEXT. REV. IAN PAISLEY DISSOCIATED HIMSELF AND DUP FROM BOAL'S PROPOSALS, SAYING THERE COULD BE (TO COIN A PHRASE) "NO SURRENDER" TO A UNITED IRELAND. TWO WEEKS LATER ON TV, PAISLEY CONCEDED INTELLECTUAL POSSIBILITY THAT IRELAND MIGHT BE UNITED SOMEDAY, BUT MADE CLEAR THAT IF UNION WAS BROKEN BY GREAT BRITAIN, HE WOULD PREFER AN INDEPENDENT ULSTER. OFFICIAL UNIONIST LEADER HARRY WEST SAID HE'D SEEN AND REJECTED BOAL'S PROPOSAL BEFORE IT WAS PUBLISHED ; IF IT BECAME IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN UNION HE WOULD SEEK INDEPENDENT ULSTER AND OPPOSE UNITED IRELAND. ULSTER DEFENCE ASSOCIATION PRESS OFFICER SAM SMYTH (WHO SOMETIMES IS ONLY SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF), IN ARTICLE FOLLOWING WEEK'S SUNDAY NEWS, ADVOCATED AN INDEPENDENT, PLURALIST, SOCIALIST ULSTER. EARLIER BRIEFING CON GEN ON HIS IDEAS, HE SAID THAT, FAILING INDEPENDENT ULSTER, UDA'S CHOICE WOULD BE "UNITED IRELAND ACCEPTABLE TO UDA," I.E. REGIONAL (6-COUNTY) PARLIAMENT. ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE, IN AN ARTICLE IN THE FEBRUARY 3 SUNDAY NEWS (SEE BELFAST 22) PRAISED BOAL FOR HAVING CONSULTED SERIOUSLY WITH THEM AND HAVING REAL ALTERNATIVE TO SUNNINGDALE; UVF DID NOT RULE OUT AN AMALGAMATED IRELAND, BUT THRUST OF ITS PROPOSALS WAS TOWARD INDEPENDENT ULSTER FREE FROM INTERFERENCE BOTH FROM LONDON AND DUBLIN.

7. AMONG CATHOLICS, RESPONSE TO BOAL'S PROPOSALS WAS MIXED. AT FIRST SOME SDLP SPOKESMEN MADE FAVORABLE NOISES, BUT FINALLY LEADER GERRY FITT REJECTED IDEA BECAUSE CATHOLICS ARE ACHIEVING ASPIRATIONS THROUGH EXECUTIVE AND SUNNINGDALE, WHILE BOAL'S PROPOSAL DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR POWER-SHARING IN NORTH. OFFICIAL REPUBLICANS WISHED BOAL HAD PUSHED FOR HIS VIEWS WHEN HE WAS IN STORMONT AND DUP. BUT PROVISIONAL REPUBLICANS WELCOMED VIEWS OF BOAL WITH OPEN ARMS, SAYING THEY WERE SIMILAR TO PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN'S OWN IDEAS FOR UNITED IRELAND IN WHICH CONSIDERABLE POWER WAS DEVOLVED TO TRADITIONAL FOUR PROVINCES, INCLUDING OLD NINE-

COUNTY ULSTER.
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8. COMMENTS:

A. BOAL'S STATEMENT THAT BRITISH ARE SEEKING TO
DISENGAGE IS WIDELY SHARED PERCEPTION HERE, AND WE ALSO
NOTE THAT MANY PROTESTANTS ARE TURNING AGAINST UNION
WITH UK.

B. VIEW THAT SUNNINGDALE ARRANGEMENTS CONSTITUTE
BLUEPRINT FOR FUTURE UNITED IRELAND IS OF COURSE HOPE
OF REPUBLICANS AND FEAR OF LOYALISTS, AND MANY OTHERS
SUSPECT THAT THIS IS WHAT UK HAS IN MIND. IT IS ALSO
TRUE THAT FAULKNER'S CONSTANT ATTEMPTS TO RATIONALIZE
POWER-SHARING EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL OF IRELAND AS
CONSISTENT WITH HIS PAST POLICIES AND LIKELY TO
STRENGTHEN UNION SEEM DISINGENUOUS TO MANY PROTESTANTS,
ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPARED WITH LUCID FRANKNESS OF BOAL.

C. MOST PEOPLE WHO HAVE THOUGHT SERIOUSLY ABOUT ACTUAL
PROBLEMS OF UNITING A PARTITIONED IRELAND BY CONSENT
HAVE AGREED THAT A FEDERAL SOLUTION COULD SATISFY
CATHOLIC/REPUBLICANS BY GETTING BRITISH OUT OF IRELAND
AND ESTABLISHING SINGLE IRISH SOVEREIGNTY OVER ENTIRE
ISLAND, WHILE PRESERVING PROTESTANT FAITH AND WAY OF
LIFE IN ULSTER WITH CONSIDERABLE LOCAL AUTONOMY. SO
IF ONE ACCEPTS BOAL'S ASSUMPTIONS THAT UK IS

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DISENGAGING AND INDEPENDENT ULSTER IS "PATENTLY
RIDICULOUS," THEN HIS PROPOSALS POINT POSSIBLE WAY TO
FUTURE.

D. HOWEVER, ALL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE LEADS US TO BELIEVE
THAT IF UNION WITH UK WERE BROKEN, VAST MAJORITY OF
ULSTER PROTESTANTS WOULD PREFER INDEPENDENT ULSTER TO
ANY SORT OF UNITED IRELAND. ADMITTEDLY BOTH UK AND
IRISH REPUBLIC HAVE VARIOUS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
BARGAINING COUNTERS WHICH THEY MIGHT USE TO PERSUADE
PROTESTANTS TO AGREE TO UNITED IRELAND, BUT BASIC
DESIRE AMONG PROTESTANTS IS FOR SELF-DETERMINATION.

E. SINCE BREAKDOWN OF BRITISH ARMY - PROVISIONAL IRA
TRUCE IN JULY 1972, BASIC BRITISH STRATEGY HAS BEEN TO
APPEAL TO MODERATES IN BOTH COMMUNITIES IN HOPE OF
ISOLATING TERRORISTS. THIS HAS DIMINISHED VIOLENCE BUT
SHOWS NO SIGNS OF ENDING IT. IF PROTESTANT AND
CATHOLIC PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS ACCEPTED BOAL'S
PROPOSALS, THEY WOULD, AS HE CLAIMS, OFFER PROSPECT OF
ENDING VIOLENCE. BUT WHILE PROVISIONALS HAVE EMBRACED
BOAL PROPOSALS AND STOPPED ATTACKS ON OFF-DUTY UDR MEN
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IN ORDER TO GET PROTESTANTS TO CONSIDER THEM, ALL
PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY GROUPS HAVE THUS FAR EITHER
REJECTED ANY ALL-IRELAND SOLUTION OR, AT LEAST,
INDICATED STRONG PREFERENCE FOR ULSTER SELF-
DETERMINATION, A SOLUTION WHICH IN TURN IS ULTIMATELY
UNACCEPTABLE TO PROVISIONAL IRA.

F. PRINCIPAL VALUE OF BOAL PROPOSALS IS THAT THEY
HAVE FORCED ANTI-SUNNINGDALE PROTESTANTS TO START
THINKING IN TERMS OF SERIOUS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE,
RATHER THAN YEARNING VAINLY FOR RESTORATION OF PRE-
1969 STORMONT OR TOTAL INTEGRATION WITH UNWILLING
GREAT BRITAIN.

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